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# homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

Friday, September 12, 1941

SUBJECT: "STOP FOOD WASTES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

On every hand these days you hear talk of saving in the interests of national defense--saving gasoline, saving aluminum, saving electricity and a lot of our other national resources. Today the saving talk is especially for the woman who does the family cooking and meal planning.

I have some hints from the home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture on ways to save food by stopping hundreds of tiny food wastes around home. But let me tell you in their own words. First of all they point out--"Waste not--want not!" is a maxim thrifty homemakers have always practiced. And today with every rise in food prices the army of thrifty homemakers gets more recruits.

For today, stopping unnecessary food wastes at home has become much more than a matter of family thrift. It is a basic step in the nationwide movement to conserve all of this country's food resources.

Food wastes happen all along the line. So the homemaker has to practice constant watchfulness from the time she buys the food or gets it from the garden until it appears on the family table. Even the smallest food waste is never a minor matter. For these tiny wastes happening over and over again total up to a staggering amount in a month or a year for the nation's 34 million homes."

And now, to get down to cases, take the wastes that happen in shopping. Say these home economists,

Groundwork for much waste is laid in unplanned shopping. Wise buyers never shop without their notes. These notes may be mental or down in writing. The shopper bases them on meal plans for the family made in advance.



Some homemakers can buy far ahead because they can make plans far ahead. Some can't. It depends on how regularly every member of the family eats at home. Some groceries can be bought long ahead of time. Some can't. It depends on how perishable they are and the storage arrangements in the home.

You can stop much shopping waste by learning marks of quality. Government grades can help you. So can other labels on packaged products. Other times, you just have to learn to recognize for yourself the difference between good and poor.

Wise shoppers also see that they get their money's worth in quantity. This, too, you can learn from reading labels. And it's good policy to be a scale-checker--see that you get all you pay for. Thrifty homemakers, for example, make sure that the butcher puts in all the fat trimmings with cuts of meat. You can use these in cooking.

And after you buy the food--you can prevent many another food waste by proper storage.

A good deal of fat is wasted in this country through improper storage. Left-over fats and drippings are good food and can be used again. But they must be stored as carefully as other fats--in a dry, cold, dark place. Left on the stove to grow rancid they'll not only be a waste in themselves. But they will spoil the flavor of other foods in which they are used.

And just as there is a right way to store fats so there is a correct way to keep other foods. These any homemaker needs to know if she wants to prevent storage losses.

Next, check on food wastes as you prepare food for cooking and serving.

There can be a lot of waste in potatoes peeled too thick; in outside leaves of lettuce or cabbage thrown away as a matter of habit; in lemons or oranges only partially squeezed; in batter or dough not scraped thoroughly out of the mixing bowl.



You can waste a lot, too, by careless preparation so dishes you make turn out to be failures. Careless measuring, for instance, can often make the difference between a successful cake and one that is thrown away entirely--or only half eaten.

And finally--

Directly and indirectly, a great many food losses are the result of bad cooking or unattractive serving.

Indirectly, poor cooking is responsible for food the family wastes by leaving portions uneaten on the plate. Tasteless, monotonous meals and servings that are too large cannot keep a family interested. And no cook should pat herself on the back for saving leftovers, if she simply warms them up and has to throw them out later on. Good cooks use leftovers so they lose their identity in an entirely new dish. Left-over vegetables, for instance, seem like something else again in scalloped dishes, in soups, and stews.

Good cooks never throw away a bit of meat drippings, but use them to fry potatoes, for instance, or flavor the string beans.

Directly, poor cooking causes even bigger wastes. There's nothing that's more of a total loss than a burned piece of toast or cake. When meat is improperly cooked at too high a temperature it shrinks in the process much more than necessary. This means fewer servings per pound. Important losses also are the vitamin values and minerals lost in improperly cooked vegetables.

In dozens of other little ways food wastes may happen at home. Every home-maker can find these out for herself. But for the time being those are all the hints I have for stopping food wastes at home--from the home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

